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**The National Testing Initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic, Year Two Work Plan
(2004—05)**

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**SO 3.4.1 Democratic Values and Market Oriented Skills are Widely Integrated into
the Curriculum**

**USAID/CAR Regional Mission
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Abbreviations

GoK	Government of Kyrgyzstan
ITO	Independent Testing Organization
MoE	Ministry of Education
NST	National Scholarship Test
CEATM	Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods



Overview

This work plan sets forth the Strategic Objectives, project components and related program activities for USAID's Kyrgyz National Testing Initiative for the contract period of March 20, 2004 to March 19, 2005. The work plan was developed utilizing the expertise and experience of American Councils' Bishkek, Almaty and Washington DC staff and experience gained during year one of the contract, 2003-2004. After defining the Strategic Objectives, the seven main project components are highlighted, followed by detailed program activity that aims to meet the stated goals. Timelines are also included in the program activity section.

1. Strategic Objectives for Kyrgyz National Testing Initiative (2004-2005)

The long term goal of this initiative is to promote the development of an independent testing organization with the capacity to provide professional assessment services in fair and transparent ways using modern educational practices and techniques. A key project in USAID's anti-corruption effort, the main project activity focuses on the development and execution of the National Scholarship Test (NST), which has provided fair access to higher education in Kyrgyzstan for the best and brightest students since 2002. It is hoped that not only will the new independent testing organization (ITO) continue to provide greater access to higher education to at-risk, disadvantaged and rural youth, but that it will provide other independent, objective services in other related educational fields as well.

Data attained through high volume testing activities will be used to inform educational policy and decision making. Testing data may reveal where curricula change can and should occur which would reinforce USAID's efforts to promote the introduction teaching methods which develop reasoning and analytical skills. The use of aptitude testing as the basis for the NST has opened the debate on "skills versus knowledge" in terms of curricular focus in the KR. For sustainable economic growth to occur in the KR over the long term, more emphasis needs to be put on the development of "skills oriented" curricula, teaching techniques and educational programming in general. High stakes testing provides real incentives for this change. Survey results are already showing that student and teacher motivation to learn new methods and approaches has increased due to the National Scholarship Test.

Finally, the testing organization also serves as a bright example that with the proper support, non-governmental organizations can work efficiently, fairly and professionally in the KR. In this way, the success of the testing organization support USAID's efforts for reform in the KR in the area of good governance as well as small enterprise development. Ultimately, the long term success of this project and others will be determined by how well the government creates favorable conditions for independent, non-government service providers to flourish.

2. Project Components that Support USAID Strategic Objectives:

- A) The Institutionalization of The Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods (CEATM)
- B) Government Support for National Scholarship Testing (NST) in 2004-2005.
- C) Test Development and Test Administration
- D) Training and Professional Development
- E) Analysis and Monitoring



- F) Public Outreach
- G) Networking to Leverage Reform

A. Institutionalization of CEATM

In January of 2004 an organizational charter and mission statement for the new ITO, The Center for Assessment in Education and Teaching Methods (CEATM) was completed. It states:

Our Mission is to promote the development of education in Kyrgyzstan and beyond through the execution of research, administration of independent assessments and testing, and improvement in teaching methods through the provision of training and consulting services.

On March 5th, 2004, CEATM was registered with the Ministry of Justice. While much was accomplished in the way of organizational development in 2003, further work on training for professional development, legal consulting, licensing with the Ministry of Education (MO) and planning for financial sustainability are priority areas for 2004-2005. Another key task is finalizing the candidates to serve on the Board of Trustees for the organization. This plan lays out the key goals and tasks in this crucial area of institutional development for CEATM for 2004-2005.

B. Government Support for National Scholarship Testing (NST)

As a major anti-corruption effort in the education arena, the NST and CEATM present targets for entrenched interests within the Kyrgyz Government. In 2002 and 2003, both the NST and American Councils faced opposition from within the Ministry of Education (MOE) and from university rectors, both of which stood to lose significant income from the illegal sale of government scholarships. In order to secure support for the development of CEATM, a determined political outreach effort is needed to ensure appropriate laws and decrees are developed to meet project goals. Mobilizing grass roots support is also important. In 2002, 2003, and 2004, the project team met with all 1,891 school directors, members of Parliament, and local government (governors) in order to share information about the project. The team also made presentations to NGOs and trained over 150 NGO leaders to serve as enrollment monitors in 2003. In 2005 the team will continue these efforts through networking and sharing information with the NGO community through their resource centers. We will especially work with USAID Democracy and Media sector supported NGOs as well as PEAKs. While we were quite successful in this area in 2002 and 2003, recent developments have shown that the closer we moved towards institutionalizing of CEATM, the stronger resistance to non-government agencies conducting the NST becomes apparent. Nonetheless, in early 2004, the project garnered high level support from the White House on the development of the Presidential decree which will pave the way for testing in 2004 and 2005.

This work plan includes efforts to further secure political backing for a truly independent Testing Organization 2004 and 2005.



C. Test Development and Administration

In 2004, the ITO will build upon the significant experience gained in the areas of test development and administration. This experience will lead to improved human and financial resource allocation, planning and institutionalization of test development and administration procedures. The introduction of new policies and procedures based on lessons learned will be introduced. In 2004, subject areas will again be included in testing. Tests in English, German, Biology and Chemistry will be created and conducted. MOE has reported that CEATM cannot conduct testing if subject tests are not offered. The team is in negotiations with the German Embassy in order to procure cost share for the creation of the German test. Aptitude testing is a complicated science and requires tremendous training, labor, consultation and peer review. This work-plan lays out the key activities that will promote improved performance in this area. This is especially important in 2004 as American Councils will be conducting the test in partnership with CEATM.

In 2004, the system of test registration will be more efficient than in 2003. Registration will be conducted closer to the students, in their own schools. This will relieve the local government officials of the heavy burden that was placed on them in 2003. The new system will also lead to greater efficiency in delivering results in a timely, organized way. Moreover, the tests will be administered differently in 2004. Approximately 25 centers will be used instead of 86 in 2003. This should lead to greater efficiency and organization of the administration process. AC plans to train 250 test administrators as well as all school directors throughout the country on how to register their students in 2004. Special attention will be paid during training to issues relating to increased costs of testing, the need for local ownership of the project as well as the necessity of paying for high quality services.

D. Training and Professional Development

The goal of this component is the development of human resources with the skills necessary to construct and administer sophisticated, secure, high quality educational assessment services. The key areas for training are: 1) test item and test development, 2) test analysis, 3) test security, 4) examinee registration, 5) test administration.

In terms of item development, training will continue in overall test construction, item weighting, equating, psychometric analysis, scoring and scaling. American Councils and consultants began training on these subjects in the first two years of the project. With USAID approval, this work with international consultants will continue in 2004 at a progressively more advanced level to ensure that the 2004 and 2005 tests fully developed and administered by CEATM meet international standards. The local team will also provide more specific and focused training support to team members who have proven to be successful test developers and administrators in 2002 and 2003. This concentration on narrow target groups will both improve efficiency of time and save resources that large, mass trainings require. Training will increasingly be done in the form of consulting at AC's offices to smaller numbers of individual specialists.



E. Analysis and Monitoring

A major objective of the Testing Initiative is to generate very detailed information and statistics about the educational system of the KR. The 2002 and 2003 tests provided MbE for the first time with data on test performance by gender, rural/urban, test language, school district, etc. in a full, 57 page report in Russian and Kyrgyz. The analysis and presentation of the data collected is intended to promote improved allocation of resources in education, improving planning and forecasting for teacher training needs, and provide feedback to administrators, teachers, students and parents on student readiness to succeed in higher education. One challenge faced in 2003 was misuse of testing data on the part of MbE staff. The project will continue to work in this area through the organization of training and seminars for MbE staff. Improper conclusions and rash actions based on test results can reduce support for this initiative among those populations that should benefit most from it. Additional outreach is planned through sustained dialogue with MOE, secondary and higher education policymakers and educators.

Analysis is also needed to ensure that the project team is achieving results in accordance with USAID Strategic Objectives. In 2003, the team conducted a survey of school directors' opinions on the new testing and enrollment processes. Data was also collected on numbers of scholarship winners by urban and rural areas. The results of these surveys are pending at this time but the team anticipates finalizing these surveys in the first quarter of the year two project. We intend to demonstrate improved access to higher education by rural youth through the collection of data on their entry to higher education through the National Scholarship Test. Data on academic performance of scholarship winners has now been collected from 12 universities. At the present time, a full report is being prepared. The project anticipates demonstrating that the NST has been successful in improving the quality of the scholarship student from 2001. Results of this work should be completed by April 10th.

F. Public Outreach

Testing as a high stakes endeavor requires public support. The project will continue to focus on providing informational seminars, trainings, use of the press (TV, radio, print, etc. in Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek) to continue to educate the public and key stakeholders about the goals of the project as well as provide information on specific questions to the test taking public. This plan contains an overview of those activities.

G. Networking to Leverage Reform

The National Testing Project is not the only educational or professional testing project active in Central Asia. American Councils has already been in contact with representatives of the AED/PEAKS project in order to discuss areas for mutual cooperation in testing and assessment. One proposal under serious discussion is the use of ITO resources for the design, construction and execution of achievement testing for fourth graders under the PEAKS project. Another is the organization of a regional seminar on assessment together with other USAID contractors (PEAKS and IFES).

3. Measuring Results in 2004- 2005



The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for this project contains a detailed description of performance measures, each designed to support USAID's Strategic Objectives. In brief, for the 2004-05 year:

Results of project success may be measured by:

Effectiveness of Testing/Selection Mechanism of Students:

- Comparative studies of scholarship student overall academic performance in 2002 and 2003 in comparison with 2001 (pre-testing) years.
- Correlation study assessing relationship between test results and academic success at the university level.
- Survey assessing relationship between test performance and academic achievement of scholarship students at the school level measured through school director opinion surveys.

Access to Education:

- Measurement of the proportion of rural vs. urban students admitted to higher education through the Scholarship Test in comparison with previous (pre-test) years (to be assessed through surveys as the GOK does not collect this data).
- Surveys of public opinion on scholarship testing and effectiveness of the university enrollment system in terms of transparency and responsiveness of university officials (NGO observers will be prepared and utilized to monitor).

Test Administration:

- Efficiency in resource allocation, accurate prognosis of testing needs (tests ordered vs. used, etc.)
- Improved registration system (registration done at school level, not on the district department level, which would facilitate more accurate filling of registration documents)
- Administration performance (actual start and stop time versus projected times, number of disqualifications, etc).
- Subject test administration (providing opportunity to take all 4 subject tests)
- Amount of income generated by the project; number of study guides sold.
- Increased efficiency in test data analysis (time spent on data analysis, percentages of hand assessed, measurement of technical mistakes, amount of data entry by hand due to mistakes, etc.)

Professional Competency of ITO Staff:

- Assessment of management of CEATM (to be assessed by American Councils three months after CEATM Director takes over full management of CEATM staff).
- Financial planning review.
- Competency in the execution of Test Administration Training (conducted in May 2004).

In addition to empirical indicators, there are other ways to assess project success:



- social and broad based political support through laws and decrees in support of the project,
- amount and kind of cost share provided by local authorities and partners,
- recognition by other international donors, testing professionals in other countries, etc.

4. National Testing Initiative Project Management

At the present time, American Councils' staff member, Todd Drummond manages the project full time. Without a strong management team in the short term, there is little chance that CEATM will succeed in garnering strong political support for CEATM. We propose handing over the full time responsibility for personnel and day to day management related issues to CEATM director Inna Valkova on July 1st, 2004. However, as conditions of the cooperative agreement dictate, USAID is not funding CEATM directly. Therefore, USAID-American Councils related issues should continue to be channeled between Todd Drummond and USAID throughout this contract year. Also, the American Councils project director will continue to oversee all financial related decisions (in cooperation with CEATM) of the project until the end of the contract date. During year two, the project manager will also spend time fundraising and providing training on key testing and assessment related issues.

The 2004 Testing Budget for this work plan is attached (see Appendix A). This budget is based on the activities of this work plan and differ slightly from the budget submitted in the proposal in year one. These differences reflect slight changes in approach and strategy required due to a fluid environment, actual test registration fee receipts that differed from projected receipts, etc. Nonetheless, American Councils fully expects to remain within the agreed upon budget through strict cost controls and successful revenue raising activities.

ITO Staff

Currently, the ITO staff consists of:

Project Director (American Councils), (Todd Drummond)
Director of CEATM (Inna Valkova)
Chief Specialist for Item and Test Construction (Natalya Naumova)
Chief Specialist for Test Administration (Nargiza Khakimova)
Chief Specialist for Public and Government Relations (Volodya Shiraev)
Accountant (Irina Zheludkova)
Translation and Logistics (Altinay Moldoeva)
Typist (Gulzat Satylganova)
Chief IT Specialist (Constantine Titov)
Security (vacant, cost sharing with American Councils)

5. Program Activity Description/Timeline for 2004-2005.



The following section contains a detailed description of project activities and a timeline for their completion in the following areas:

1. **CEATM Institutionalization: Management, Training, and Financial Planning**
2. **Government and Public Relations**
3. **Training of Test Item Developers and Test Administrators**
4. **Test and Test Materials Production**
5. **Test Administration**
6. **Analysis & Monitoring Activities**
7. **Networking to Leverage Reform**

1. CEATM Institutionalization: Management, Training and Financial Sustainability

Board of Trustees

The first task to be accomplished in year two is the establishment of the board of trustees for CEATM. Another key task is licensing with the Ministry of Education (MOE). The project anticipates accomplishing both these tasks in the first quarter of the year two contract after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between USAID and MOE in April, 2004.

The purpose of the Board of Trustees will be to provide CEATM with:

- a. experienced advisors capable of assisting in the long-term development of the organization.
- b. supervision of senior CEATM management to guarantee that overall goals and policies are met and observed.
- c. political clout in order to continue the CEATM's anti-corruption and educational reform activities in the face of potential opposition from various stakeholders.

This oversight body should derive its membership from the ranks of stakeholders (including the Ministry of Education and American Councils). The Board of Trustees is a deliverable of this work plan and will be submitted for approval to USAID. American Councils expects to utilize the significant experience of other USAID funded projects in creating this oversight body.

Financial Planning

Improving financial efficiency in execution of high volume testing is essential to future sustainability. Lessons learned from 2002 and 2003 will be translated into concrete, results oriented improvements in efficiency in 2004-05. One concrete example of a lesson learned from the first two years of testing is that CEATM cannot afford to provide each student with his or her own test booklet. In 2004, test booklets will be reusable, amounting to a savings of around \$15,000 USD. Other changes will be made to further promote financial efficiency (less travel during testing, fewer administrators, etc.). We also anticipate increasing study guide sales from 2003. In 2004, overall, a greater portion of project income will be self-generated than in 2003 (17%). We estimate that level to be over 60% for the remainder of this contract.



Setting test costs is a political and sensitive endeavor. At this time it is not possible to project test prices for 2005. First, the team must get through testing in 2004, do a thorough analysis of expenses and propose areas (if any) for economizing in 2005. Public opinion also has to be taken into account. Over \$150,000 was generated in 2004. This represents about 40% of the total project cost, but a much higher percentage if “out of country costs” are removed. Therefore, the odds of reaching financial sustainability are high. If testing in 2004 is successful, maintaining or slightly raising testing fees in 2005 will be easier. We have already met with Deputy Orozbekov about presenting testing results and a sustainability plan to Parliament in the fall of 2004. In order to reach sustainability, CEATM will need either 1) significant tax breaks in 2005, 2) some government subsidization into the project, or 3) the location of a third party donor source. In any case, assuming roughly \$160- 170,000 in income generated through testing fees and other services, a grant of about \$50,000 USD or a full tax break would be enough to cover ALL in-country expenses for an entire testing year. The final course of action will be determined in the fall of 2005.

In the fall of 2003, team members received training in fundraising and the development of business plans. In December of 2003, a full time accountant with experience in local tax laws and related issues was brought on to the project. In order to optimize the taxation regime, the company was registered as a non-commercial “educational institution.” The institution will pay the following taxes: income tax on the salaries of employees – 10% rate for the salaries amounting up to 60,000 Soms a year, 20% rate for the salaries of over 60,000 Soms a year; allocation to the Social Fund - 33%; allocation to the Fund for Prevention and Liquidation of Emergencies – 1,5%; road-user tax – 0,8 %; profit tax – 20%; VAT – 20%; retail tax and tax on providing paid services to the population – 4%; tax on advertisement – 3%. It is expected that tax payments will be highest during the test registration period.

Given the need for financial self-sustainability it is crucial to reduce CEATM’s tax exposure. Due to the nature of the cash flow (collecting large amounts in a short period and holding on to it for long periods of time) CEATM may not qualify for non-profit status, unless the President directly intervenes on behalf of CEATM. Higher tax rates mean higher burdens on the consumers, hitting the rural poor especially hard. Tax related questions will need to be discussed with USAID and GOK in the very near future.

With the 2004 Test, registration fees will be increased as a method for self-financing CEATM’s activities. The roughly \$3 registration fee, however, is not sufficient to reach a break-even point. Therefore, it is necessary for the ITO to:

- a. increase the registration fees for the 2005 Test
- b. identify new avenues for raising revenue

Increasing registration fees on the test should not pose too heavy of a burden on test takers and their families. Currently, almost all universities charge fees ranging from \$3-5 per application. Moreover, any individual who cannot muster such a small sum to take the test will likely not be able to find the funds for higher education even with a full scholarship. Last year, the 2003 test showed that all but the most desperately poor were willing to pay for a test that was deemed fair and transparent.



For both the 2004 and 2005 tests, American Councils will assist CEATM in developing test study guides for sale to the general public. While only a deliverable for the 2004 Test, American Councils developed and produced a study guide for the 2003 Test. This study guide was sold throughout the country. Despite rampant copyright abuse, CEATM was able to earn approximately \$4,000 USD in 2003 year from study guide sales, even though it went on sale only a week before the start of the test. In 2004, a major advertising campaign will be executed in order to increase sales. Sales targets are set out in the monitoring and evaluation plan. Also, during the second half of this contract year, project director Todd Drummond will devote time to searching for possible grants or other funds to assist CEATM in 2005- 06. In 2004 American Councils will seek out support of the German government for assistance in developing the German Language Test. Finally, in 2004-05, American Councils recommends that USAID approach the Kyrgyz Government (together with CEATM) to open discussions on GOK cost-share support for the project in future years. Even relatively small contributions from the GOK could help keep testing prices low and help ensure high quality services. If costs are to be kept politically acceptable, funding diversification over the long term is essential.

At the completion of year two, American Councils will have provided CEATM with a solid legal and financial foundation.

	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
Legal & Financial Support												
1. Board of Trustees (BOT)												
2. BOT - Membership												
3. Asset transfer												
Additional Revenue												
1. Test Registration Fees												
2. Study Guides												

Management of CEATM

Measuring the managerial effectiveness of key CEATM staff represents another vital portion of American Councils' analysis and monitoring activities. In 2004, American Councils will conduct monitoring and measurement to determine the level to which: a) CEATM staff have mastered and implemented those ideas presented during previous training, b) the level to which CEATM staff are able to act as trainers of these subjects, and c) how well director Inna Valkova is in overall organizational management (to be assessed in September and February). The latter is vital for the long-term viability of CEATM.

Key team members were trained in fundraising and business planning in 2003. In 2004-05 we anticipate additional training in staff management and strategic planning. Actual training will be conducted by organizations such as Counterpart, Pragma, or the Center for Training and Consulting, a local services provider.

The 2004-05 management training needs for CEATM are:

- Human Resources Management
- Tax Law and Compliance with regulations of the KR.



- c. Strategic Planning
- d. Grant Proposal Writing

The CEATM training schedule follows:

Personnel Training	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
1. Human Resources								
2. Tax Law								
3. Strategic Planning								
4. Grant Proposal Writing								

2. Government and Public Relations

In 2003, NST was institutionalized by law. In order to provide a normative framework for the NST, in 2004 American Councils will continue to promote the development of Presidential and Ministerial decrees to mandate National Scholarship Testing. Specific provisions will be included to ensure that university enrollment is conducted fairly and transparently and that legislation and decrees must call for independent monitoring of these processes. American Councils will coordinate closely with USAID on all questions related to this matter.

Memorandum of Understanding with MO and MO licensing

Registration documents were submitted to the Ministry of Justice in February, 2004. CEATM was officially registered on March 5th, 2004. Upon the completion of registration, the project began to pursue the completion of the Presidential decree as priority number one. In April of 2004, before testing is carried out, the project will sign a Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and MOE on a host of questions relating to test administration. While in principle many questions will be resolved with the Presidential decree, there are other questions (detailed issues, delegating responsibilities, etc.) that should be put into writing before testing can be conducted in 2004. Also, CEATM should get a license to operate from MOE before testing begins. Testing prices should also be cleared with the State Anti-Monopoly committee. These are crucial objectives of the first quarter of this contract period.

Government Relations	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
1. CEATM Registration												
2. Presidential Decree												
3. MOU with MoE												
4. MOE licensing												
5. Anti-monopoly committee												



Public Outreach – Key Stakeholders and the General Population

In addition to further developing government relations, a key objective for this contract period is to garner support from school and university teachers, university administrators, parents and other key stakeholders. Both CEATM and the test have faced serious political opposition from elements of the GOK and from many universities. Some of this opposition derived from a lack of knowledge/misunderstanding about the test. Throughout the year, the team will conduct half day and full day seminars in our office with selected stakeholders on key assessment and testing issues. Based on surveys carried out in 2003, on the whole, the public attitude towards the National Scholarship Test is positive, thanks to the constant efforts of the project team. However, focused work with key stakeholders is still necessary.

American Councils and CEATM will continue its public relations campaign in an attempt to describe the goals of CEATM to the general public. The level of social trust for such “local enterprises” is quite low. Numerous TV and radio appearances, newspaper articles and seminars are planned. Articles on testing and the CEATM have been published in English, Russian and Kyrgyz languages in 2003 and we will continue to publish them in 2004-05. American Councils and CEATM will hold trainings for university representatives, school directors, and representatives of the Obluno, Rayono, and Gorono. Team members will continue to provide information to the Parliamentary Committee on Education in addition to MOE and the White House.

Results of surveys undertaken in early 2004 will also be made public. In 2004, American Councils will maintain efforts to make both research and general material available by providing all test takers with both free brochures on the test as well the scholarship distribution process, poster campaigns and school visits.

While it is important to keep public attention focused on the monitoring of the enrollment processes, these are tasks better suited for ACCELS and USAID which are politically protected. It is neither the role of a testing organization nor is it politically prudent for an NGO, dependent on the government for future work, to take on the role of watch dog of government agencies. The testing agency should strive to maintain a neutral relationship with both the Ministry of Education and universities. In the end, the only way for transparent enrollment to become institutionalized is for civil society to take active ownership of monitoring the process. The Presidential decree allows for opening monitoring. ACCELS will work hard to mobilize key NGO and other civil society groups to take an active part in monitoring the enrollment process, as in 2003. Cooperation with other USAID contractors as well as with groups like Transparency International is planned. Budget permitting, we will also produce TV and other public relations material on the importance of monitoring the process, including possibly a short video or other material for public use.

Every year, American Councils has held some kind of forum on test results and lessons learned after testing is complete. In 2003 a seminar was held in the White House. The team feels it is important to gather key stakeholders in some kind of forum to discuss how to improve testing for the next year. This can be done at reasonable price yet help keep key stakeholders in the loop. This year we propose a “National Seminar on Educational Assessment,” focusing not only on NST results but expanding the



scope to talk about assessment in general, different kind of assessments, their use and purposes. We propose making this a one day event in September.

Public Outreach	Mar 04	Apr 04	May 04	Jun 04	Jul 04	Aug 04	Sep 04	Oct 04	Nov 04	Dec 04	Jan 05	Feb 05	Mar 05
School visits													
Seminars with Stakeholders													
Newspaper Articles													
Poster campaign													
Release brochure for CEATM													
Radio, TV, campaign, including enrollment monitoring													
Release of sample testing questions in newspaper													
Seminar on National Educational Assessment													
University Outreach													
Report on Testing 2004													

3. Training of Test Item Developers and Test Administrators

This component consists of training activities for CEATM core staff, test item writers and proctors. The goal is to build upon previous trainings by American Councils and its consultants to enhance CEATM's capability in independently developing and managing all aspects of the 2005 test.

Training for Test Administrators

In 2004, test administration training will be conducted by American Councils and CEATM specialists. This training will include subjects such as securing and managing test facilities, organizing document verification, understanding test structure, answers sheet use, managing test centers, working with the public and authorities, developing seating charts, protocols, appropriate disqualification, dealing with unpredictable situations, cheating, checking documents, rules and procedures, distribution, collection and



storage of materials. Also, time will be devoted to team building and cooperation amongst team members as administration teams spend a week together in conditions of no running water, cramped quarters, and schools with no electricity.

Due to changes in the test administration system in 2004, fewer administrators will be required to conduct this year's test. In 2003 over 600 administrators were recruited. In 2004, experienced administrators will be drawn from our existing database.

	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
Test Administration Training							
Test Administration Training							

Training of Test Developers and Technical Staff

Although the initial plan for this contract called for no new western consultancies in 2004-05, American Councils proposes using some cost savings from year one to finance consultancies for two leading specialist in test development- Gary Buck, PhD. linguistics, and Naomi Gafni, PhD. Psychometric Methods. As testing science is new to Kyrgyzstan, these are areas in which CEATM still needs technical support.

American Councils proposes inviting Professor Gary Buck to work with CEATM staff on psychometrics and statistical analysis of test items. Professor Buck's experience includes serving as the Director of Assessment for Ballard & Tighe. During this time he created and managed a new assessment division and designed a new generation of tests to meet the President's *No Child Left Behind* requirements. While serving as the Dean of Test Development and Standards of the Defense Language Institute at Monterey, Professor Buck oversaw a division with 50 test developers who developed Defense Language Institute tests in 21 different languages. Professor Buck has consulted on test development for the College Board, American Councils, NATO, The British Council, as well as universities.

CEATM also needs more fundamental training on item response theory. We propose inviting Professor Naomi Gafni to work with CEATM in this area. Professor Gafni currently serves as the Director of Research and Development at the National Institute for Testing and Evaluation (NITE), Jerusalem, Israel. She is directly responsible for item development in verbal reasoning- vocabulary, analogies, sentence completion, logic and reading comprehension as quantitative reasoning and English as a second language. Professor Gafni has over twenty years of research and practical experience in testing and assessment. Her research interests include test equating, item differential functioning, guessing, and item response theory parameter estimation. As Israel has a multi-lingual testing environment like Kyrgyzstan, the Israeli experience would be useful for Kyrgyzstan.

A full budget for these proposed activities will be forwarded as an addendum to this work plan.

Throughout the contract period, item developers will continue to get small group training in their related fields from core CEATM staff. In March 2004, the last trainer from the year one contract, Betty Leaver, conducted test development seminars for the language subject test developers (English and German).



Also, in order to improve the test developers' professional skills we plan to conduct special trainings. The first such training, to be held in September 2004, will be entitled "Lessons Learned from Test Performance in 2004." In January 2005, we will conduct "Research Issues in Test Development and Analysis." This training is planned for the reviewers and test developers of all groups that had worked on the test of 2004 and continue to work in 2005.

A small portion of personnel from the test development group are constantly renewed due to attrition, performance, etc. each year. Training new personnel is an ongoing process and is part of the daily work of core staff. New item writers will receive special interactive trainings on the basic principles of test development throughout the contract period. These trainings will be conducted by CEATM staff and do not entail significant costs to USAID. In October, 2004, we plan a two-day seminar entitled "How to Write Test Items." In addition to training our own internal staff, this year we plan to offer courses on a fee for service basis. In November-December 2004, we plan to design paid seminars on testing issues for the school teachers. The seminars may be conducted in different formats (one-day, two-day, three-day etc.) and on different topics depending on the demand. Execution of these seminars will start in January, 2005. It is important to emphasize that these courses are not "preparatory courses" on how to take the NST. These will be general courses related to the science of assessment and educational measurement. Assessment as a separate educational field is virtually unknown in Kyrgyzstan and the need for this kind of training is tremendous. Fees will need to be set based on actual incurred costs but not for profit as CEATM is registered as a non-profit organization. CEATM staff will be careful to coordinate any training designs created with USAID support with other ongoing USAID efforts to avoid duplication of effort and waste.

We also hope to work with AED/Start in order to receive funding for a study tour or internship for our technical staff (two people) abroad; either in Israel or Europe. This most difficult area needs more development and contact hours with western specialists would be very fruitful.

Training in Test Development	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
1. Betty Leaver (subject tests)												
2. Naomi Gafni												
3. Gary Buck												
4. Lessons Learned from 2004												
5. Basics in Item Writing												
6. Research Issues in Testing												
7. Design Seminars for Teachers												
8. Execute FFS Seminars for teachers												
9. Study Tour - Technical Staff												

4. Tests and Test Materials Production



Based on the performance of last year's items and tests, improvements will be made in both quantity and quality of items for the test item bank for 2004. Items of poor quality based on last year's analysis will be removed from the test item bank. The time allowed to complete certain test sections may be adjusted and improvements in both protocols and written procedural guidelines for test administration will be improved. The security regime will be improved through further distancing item developers from the final test products as well as by improving technical capability to safeguard materials

Two of the main activities CEATM will undertake in 2004-05 are the production of the actual tests (main and 4 subject tests) and the development of corresponding test study guides. The production of the core test and the four subject tests according to international standards is a significant undertaking. American Councils staff will ensure ownership of the test construction process on the part of leading local specialists. Aptitude tests designed to elicit higher order thinking skills require a significant amount of time to develop, review, edit, translate (when necessary), and produce. "Pre-tests" must first be designed and administered (March). Then, on the basis of these results, test items will be put into final test format and checked again several times (April). The result will be multiple-variant tests in Kyrgyz, Russian, and Uzbek, that test mathematical reasoning (numeracy), verbal and grammar skills (literacy). Subject tests in English, German, Biology, and Chemistry will also be developed. Security regimes will be developed and access to sensitive material and physical space limited. Publication of tests will commence in May.

Tests (Main and Subject)	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-03	Jan-05	Feb-05
1. Pre-Testing ('04)												
Test Assembly												
Test Publication												
2. Item Writing ('05)												
A. Biology (Subject)												
B. Chemistry (Subject)												
C. English (Subject)												
D. German (Subject)												
E. Verbal												
F. Mathematics												

Brochures and Other Materials

In November of 2004, Study Guides for the National Scholarship Test, second edition will be released. The manual will be revised significantly due to the changes in the structure and content of the test. New sections will be included in the manual. Also, subject tests (Chemistry, Biology, English and German languages and, possibly, Kyrgyz History) will be included in the manual. The manual will be issued in Russian, Kyrgyz, and Uzbek languages. The study guide will be issued for sale.

Short booklets for students will be distributed free of charge (included in testing fees) during registration for the test and will contain basic information about the test, complete with example test problems. This



year, a small section on project goals and roles and responsibilities of all key partners (AC, MOE, and CEATM) will be added.

In October of 2004, a test developer's handbook will be completed. The purpose of this book is to support the professional development of test item writers. Finally, in November 2004, a teacher's booklet "How to Prepare Students for the Test?" will go on sale. The intent of this booklet is help change classroom practice to improve critical thinking skills. It will provide recommendations for new techniques as well as the principles and foundation upon which the test is based.

Other Materials	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-03	Jan-05	Feb-05
1. Study Guides												
Publication of test information and sample questions												
<i>Official Study Guide: 2004</i>												
A. Publication and Distribution												
<i>Official Study Guide: 2005 (new)</i>												
A. Development												
B. Publication and Distribution												
2. Other Materials												
Testing Brochures (free)												
Item Writer's Handbook												
Teacher's Booklet												

5. Test Administration

In 2004, the NST will be administered in fewer test sites but will last for more days. This economizes test administration time, i.e. cuts extra travel and site preparation days. It also cuts transportation costs. One team will spend about 1 week at each test site. The first day will be a preparation day. After about 3 days of testing the 4th day will be a break day, and then testing will go for another 2-3 days. The new system also makes it easier for the Chief Test Administration Specialist to manage the testing administration process from the center. Project Director Todd Drummond will monitor test administration in the south of the country and CEATM director Inna Valkova will monitor test administration in the north of the country.



Advance registration was introduced in National Scholarship Testing in 2003. It proved to be effective. It provided an accurate prognosis of test takers by language, by subject tests and by test sites. In 2004, advance registration has been somewhat improved. Registration of test takers currently studying in their graduate year will be done at their place of study. Specially nominated people from each school will go to the district level education department to pick up registration documents.

Previously graduated test takers will pick up registration packets from the district level education department, fill out documents at home and bring them back to education department. This system will relieve test takers from stress they experience in a crowded registration point and lower the rate of mistakes when filling out forms. That also takes the load off the representative of district level education department who works with us only on a part time level keeping his/her original duties.

After registration, forms will be scanned and the database will be created. We predict around forty-three thousand students will register for the test this year. Testing tickets (talons) will be produced and sent to each examinee. All procedural documents and protocols (registration, answer sheets, test items) for the National Scholarship Test of 2004 and 2005 will be produced during this time.

Test administration for this plan includes all activities directly connected with conducting the 2004 tests. Specifically, test administration includes:

- Production and Printing of 43,000 tests in secure manner.
- Secure packaging of tests for each test site.
- Delivery of tests and test teams to test sites.
- Preparation of test sites to conform, to the extent local conditions permit, to international test administration standards.
- On-site registration of test takers two months prior to testing.
- Provision of late registration for increased fees.
- Processing registration materials and compiling testing schedules.
- Distribution of test materials.
- Explanation of test rules in the Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek languages.
- Proctoring tests.
- Re-packaging and delivering of all tests to ITO head office in Bishkek.
- Scanning of all test results into the database.
- Distribution of results to test takers and other stakeholders.

Test Administration	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
Test Administration							
Registration of Test Takers							
Late Registration							
Processing reg. materials							
Print Tests							
Test Packaging							
Delivery of tests to test sites							





were the norm, the new test encourages critical thinking skills and measures and rewards academic ability.

As CEATM gains experience, American Councils sees opportunities for the organization to assist other countries' efforts at education reform as well. In 2004 we have already been in contact with testing centers in Uzbekistan and Lithuania. In 2004, American Councils will support CEATM in marketing its efforts outside of Kyrgyzstan. Not only are these efforts a natural outgrowth of the CEATM's activities, they will directly affect the financial sustainability of the organization by broadening the funding base. Our goal is to identify and secure at least one such opportunity outside of Kyrgyzstan by the end of 2004.

Moreover, American Councils sees valuable opportunities for collaboration with other USAID projects in the education sphere. Discussion is currently under way to conduct a regional seminar on assessment with PEAKS, IFES and other USAID implementing partners. As mentioned previously, CEATM hopes to benefit from USAID training programs and can also offer its services experience other USAID contractors in the education sector. Given time for planning, there is no reason why CEATM can not develop assessment instruments for the benefit of PEAKS.

American Councils sees also additional opportunities for expanding CEATM's activities with the support of the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and other donors. CEATM staff will approach such donors for support of not only the current testing activities but for the expansion of these activities outside Kyrgyzstan.

Market Services Outside KG	Mar-04	Apr-04	May-04	Jun-04	Jul-04	Aug-04	Sep-04	Oct-04	Nov-04	Dec-04	Jan-05	Feb-05
Market CEATM Services to MDB's/alternative funders												